## THE STAR ANTARES.

**Its Mass Is Many Thousand Times Greater Than the Sun.**

In the constellation Scorpio, seen, when visible at all, low down in our southern sky, is a star of about the first magnitude, called Antares. This object is, according to measurement of its parallax by Sir David Gill, enormously distant and must therefore be a colossal body. One of our astronomers, J. E. Gore, computed from photometric considerations that its mass is probably 88,000 times that of the sun. As a rule, the tendency of astromoners is to doubt whether such differences as these figures imply exist among the clestial orbs, but undoubtedly the mass of Antares must be exceptional. Mr. Larkin of the Lowe observatory, California, points out that round this great star is a wide region "about as void of stars as any known to the telescope." Many starless fields are encountered in the heavens. "These blackened and waste areas show no stars, or, if any, they are on the extreme limit of vision. In this splendid and pure mountain air. In these dark expanses no trace of the delicate, pearl white, shimmering background of the sidereal structure can be seen. The inference is that all the matter once in this area has been drawn in to build up the colossal sun Antares." The space has been swept clean. In the constellations Sagittarius and Scorpio there exist many black fields without either star or nebulous background.—London Telegraph.

## A STRANGE DELUSION.

**Why So Few Prisoners Escape From the Andaman Islands.**

The number of convicts who have succeeded in making their escape from the Andamans is comparatively small, the natural difficulties of almost impenetrable jungle with which the islands are densely covered and the wide stretch of sea separating them from the Indian or Burman mainland presenting almost insurmountable obstacles to the enterprising runaway.

Among a large number of the convicts there is a curious belief prevalent that the Andamans are in reality a part of the mainland of India, the long sea voyage being merely a ruse on the part of the sirkar, which endeavors to deceive them as to the real position of the settlement by making the ship that brings them go round in a circle for several days before landing them in the harbor of Port Blair. Many of them accordingly are firmly convinced that if they can only succeed in making their way through the belt of jungle that hedges them in they must eventually find themselves back in their own country, and not even the disastrous fate of the misguided few who from time to time make the attempt only to perish miserably of starvation or by an Andamanese arrow is sufficient to discourage them or to destroy their faith in this astonishing delusion.—Madras Mail.

**More or Less Name.**

In the early days in California a young German, John G. Almondinger, wishing to Americanize himself as much as possible, applied to the legislature and had his name changed to John G. Almond. A few days later a man named John Smith applied to the same legislature, and after reciting a long catalogue of the ills to which he was subject, owing to his unfortunately common name, he said in conclusion, "And whereas I have noticed that you have curtailed the name of J. G. Almondinger to J. G. Almond and have not disposed of the 'inger,' which seems to be lying around loose, I respectfully request that the same may be added to my name." The result of the appeal is not stated.—San Francisco Argonaut.

**Some Odd Customs.**

Although a Japanese bride wears white, the color is not worn as a sign of rejoicing. In the Flowery Kingdom white is a sign of mourning, and therefore the bride is dressed as a corpse to indicate that thereafter she is dead to her own family.

A would be bridegroom in Kamchatka has to serve some time in a menial position in his prospective father-in-law's household in order that the bride's family may have an opportunity of observing whether his habits and temperament are worthy of her.

Among some of the ancient Mexican tribes the husband left his people and dwelt with his wife's family, where he seems to have been considered of minor importance.

**Hospital Humor.**

The London Hospital in its column headed "Humor In the Wards," tells of a laboring man, unmarried, well over fifty, who was discovered mopping his eyes with a very wet handkerchief on the evening of his arrival. No, he had no pain, hadn't heard any bad news, was not uncomfortable, but he had never left home before, and he couldn't help crying! A laborer in London and a bachelor! Be it ever so humble, it "wins the money" over a hospital

## EQUAL TO THE EMERGENCY

By FRANK H. SWEET

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Two of the trains had already pulled up the company's wharf to the main line, and a third was sending out its last signaling whistle when a girl hurried down track 9 with a basket covered by a napkin, evidently containing a lunch.

Messenger 16 was swaying unsteadily at the open door of a car, and the girl went straight to him, her eyes bright, her cheeks flushed. But as she drew near she suddenly recoiled, a look of terror coming to her face.

"Ben," her white lips tried to say, but no sound came from them.

The man passed a hand across his brow weakly, holding to the car by the other. The girl went a step nearer.

"What does it mean?" Her voice quivered hoarsely. "Oh, Ben!"

Something of the agony in the cry seemed to penetrate the man's dulling brain, for a tremor went through him and he straightened suddenly, as though by a great effort. The dull eyes opened and shut heavily, and again the hand passed across the forehead as though to force some intelligence into the clogged brain. Then:

"D-don't speak like that, girlie," an unrecognizable voice mumbled. "I'm not drunk. I never drank a drop in my life. You know I—speak—true. It's a d-r-ug," his voice drifting back again into the stupor.

The girl was beside him with a swift movement, the basket thrust into the car, her hands placed firmly upon his shoulders, her eyes close and gazing straight into his, lovingly, compellingly.

"Ben," the voice forcing itself into clearness and steadiness, "look at me now, hard. What is it? Think!"

The man made a supreme effort.

"It was messenger 12—Timson, you know."

She knew. She had refused Timson's love.

"He offered me a drink of water, and I took it. Then he crossed to track 3 and jumped on board his train. It was the one that just pulled out."

"But what did he do it for?"

"Don't you understand, Delia?" a sharp agony quivering in the voice. "This trip was to furnish the money for our wedding. Timson knew it. He planned it just before my train starts, so I will lose the trip. There is no time to find a substitute. My train will go without me, and the company will be angry and discharge me for drunkenness, and—and"—his eyes again becoming dull and his form swaying more heavily—"and I'm losing myself. I can't see you. Quick, girlie, find the manager and tell him it isn't drink. A—a discharged messenger cannot get work anywhere."

He lurched forward and would have fallen, but she caught him in her strong, supple arms.

A quick glance both ways showed no one was in sight. The fruit train on track 5 was just leaving the wharf, and 6 was sounding its last warning call. Half carrying and half leading him, she hurried messenger 16 to the nearest entrance, only a few yards away. Several drays were standing about waiting for a job. She motioned imperiously to the owner of the nearest.

"Listen, Ben," she said slowly, putting her lips close to the ears of the now almost insensible man in an effort to make him hear and comprehend. "I am going to send you home. You mustn't worry a bit. I will fix it all right." He was holding his train papers tightly, and she unclasped them gently from his fingers. Then as the drayman came forward: "Take this man to his home at once, 12 Rue Citronelle. Here is a dollar."

Inside, she again glanced sharply around. A man was running in her direction, heading toward the rear of the train. She recognized him as a friend of Ben's.

"Hello, Miss Delia!" he called. "Come to see Ben off again, have you? He's a lucky dog. But you must excuse my hurry. This train pulls out in three minutes, and I must reach my section."

Delia could hear her heart thumping in its anxiety.

"Your section is in the rear, I suppose?" she questioned, with assumed carelessness.

"Yes"—over his shoulder—"the eighteen rear cars. I'm messenger 28. Ben has the forward twenty cars. I switch off at Memphis for Jefferson City and Ben goes on to Columbus."

As he hurried away Delia's face cleared. She had learned all she wanted to know. Placing her hands upon the floor of the car she gave a light spring and was within, sliding the door quickly behind her. A few moments later her own bell rang, and then the car began to move forward.

She had never been on a train before, never been out of New Orleans, but her father had been a messenger, and Ben had many times told her the details of his trip. She must manipulate the ventilators of her twenty cars so as to have the heat just right to bring the bananas to prime, marketable condition when she reached her destination. A few degrees too much either way might mean the loss of a good many thousand dollars to the company.

It was a hard trip, for the outside thermometer rose from 31 degrees to 70 degrees in six hours, and the next morning was back again to 31 degrees and falling. It meant a constant shifting of the ventilators, with an impossibility of keeping the car thermometers from fluctuating uneasily. Zero weather would have been infinitely preferable, for then the ventilators could have remained closed and the fruit would generate enough heat of its own. That night and the next day Delia did not trust herself to sit down once, for fear she might get drowsy and momentarily relax her vigilance. Too much depended upon obtaining the best results just now.

She was careful to keep herself out of sight, and this she was able to do the more readily on account of the fruit train making few stops. At Memphis the rear section was switched off to connect with a train west, and her own was attached to a train which had just pulled in from Galveston, the engine returning to New Orleans with a lot of empty cars.

A few hours later, at a watering stop, the new conductor caught sight of her as he was hurrying along the train. She was just sliding the door, but too late.

"Hello," he cried, pausing; "a woman—tramp!"

Delia slid back the door.

"No, sir," she answered quietly, holding up the papers she had taken from Ben. "I am in charge of this section. I haven't had a chance to see you before."

The conductor gave a long whistle which ended in an apologetic cough. But his face lengthened visibly.

"What's the company thinking of?" he ejaculated hotly. "Next we know girls will be put in as conductors and brakemen and engineers." And he hurried away, still choking resentfully.

Seven days later Delia entered the company's office at New Orleans. The manager himself happened to be in, and he seemed to recognize her by the papers she carried in her hand. He came forward quickly. But at that moment a figure which had been lounging about the street door—a white, anxious faced man, who had been peering into the office most of the time for the last eight days—also saw her and rushed in. She turned to him first.

"How are you, Ben?" she asked eagerly. "All right?"

"Yes, yes! But you? What have you been up to, girlie? The office has been full of talk."

The manager was beside them now.

"Is this Miss Delia?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir. Here are the receipts your commission agents gave me. They said the fruit was in prime condition."

The manager glanced over the papers hurriedly.

"Yes, yes; they're all right," he said. "But we knew that before. Our agents wired us that the fruit was in the very best condition—as good as they had ever received. I—I hardly know what to do about this. It's a most untoward thing and should receive our severest censure, and yet you did as well as our very best messenger—better almost. I suppose we shall have to pass it over. But such a thing must never happen again. No," as her gaze went inquiringly toward Ben, "we have not discharged him. He may go on the next trip. And you—well, it was a most untoward thing, but I suppose you did the best you could under such short notice. You may stop at the cashier's window for your money, and—yes, there's a little recognition for you there also. You saved us from a possible great loss. But remember the recognition is accompanied by our most severe censure."

**His Was Better.**

Robert S. Hawkes, always known as "the vicar of Morwenstowe" and a poet of no mean ability, was brought up by his grandfather, a very learned and religious man. In the church where this old gentleman preached the evening service always closed with the that hymn, 'Lord, Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing," which was composed by Dr. Hawkes himself. His grandson, who did not know the authorship of the hymn, came to the doctor one day with a paper in his hand, saying:

"Grandfather, I don't altogether like that hymn 'Lord, Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing.' I think it might be improved in meter and language and that it would be better if it were somewhat longer."

"Oh, indeed!" said Dr. Hawkes, reddening. "And pray, Robert, what improvements commend themselves to your precocious wisdom?"

"This is my improved version," said Robert. And he read aloud a very creditable hymn, after which he repeated the old version, saying innocently, "This one is crude and flat, don't you think so, grandfather?"

"Crude and flat, sir! Young puppy, it is mine! I wrote that hymn!"

"Oh, I beg your pardon, grandfather! I didn't know that. It's a very nice hymn indeed, but," as he went out of the door, "mine is better!"

**A Garbled Message.**

At the last moment Mr. Gayley found he could not attend the garden party at Miss Fenton's house, and it was, of course, imperative that he should send his regrets, so he summoned Michael, the family gardener.

"Tell Miss Bessie that I am very sorry, but business will prevent me coming," he said.

"Yes, sir," said Michael.

"And—stay a moment," said Gayley. "Could you remember a line of poetry?"

"Certainly, sorr."

"Well, tell her, 'Though lost to sight, to memory dear.'"

Half an hour later Michael was delivering his message to Miss Fenton.

"The master said it's sorry he is he can't be wid ye," said Michael, "and—and, though he's lost his sight, his memory's clear. And may I be forgiven for the untruth I'm tellin' ye!" —London Globe.

**Mislaid.**

"I mislaid $250 last night."

"Tough luck. Can't you think where you put it?"

"Yes, I know; I laid it on the wrong card."—Cleveland Leader.

**A Modern Antique.**

A story told of Pistrucci has its point for collectors. Pistrucci was an Italian and chief engraver at the mint. It is, by the way, to him that England is indebted for the fine group of St. George and the dragon on the reverse of the sovereign. He insisted that modern work in cameo should be quite as fine as ancient work. A "potboiler" head of Flora which he engraved and sold to a dealer for £5 was afterward sold as an antique to Richard Payne Knight for £500. Knight took the cameo in triumph to Pistrucci.

"Where can you get modern work like that?" he asked.

Pistrucci smiled and claimed the antique for his own. Knight would not believe him.

"Examine the roses," said the artist, "and you will see that they are modern flowers."

The point was admitted by others, but never by Knight, who bequeathed the gem and the rest of his collection to the nation. But for the roses an expert would undoubtedly pronounce Pistrucci's cameo a fine antique.



## THE REDEMPTIONERS.

**Miseries of Those Who Got Into Debt In Olden Times.**

In Daniel De Foe's time debtors were frequently compelled in seeking means to extricate themselves from their embarrassments to consent to anything if they thereby could avoid the horrors of the debtors' prison. In many cases they took advantage of a custom that in one form or another had a sanction of antiquity, and being generally able-bodied men they placed themselves in the hands of some merchant or agent, who, having effected an arrangement with the creditors, took possession of the unfortunate debtors and, hurrying them to the nearest seaport, shipped them abroad, generally to Virginia or Maryland, as so much merchandise. Sometimes the dealer accompanied his cargo in order, if possible, to obtain a better price at the end of the voyage.

Arrived at their destination, the captives—to give them their real name—were sold to any planter whose offer would recoup the agent for the sum he had expended in purchase and transit and also allow him a handsome profit. By the terms of this sale the captive was bound to serve his new master for several years, his liberty being nominally secured at the end of that period, and from the hope of redemption and deliverance thus held out to him the term "redemptioner" came to be applied to these unfortunates.

But any hopes that the redemptioner might cherish of his ultimate liberation soon proved fallacious, and he found himself plunged into fresh embarrassments long before his period of servitude had expired.

Charges were made upon him for clothing, for tobacco, even for the necessaries of life—charges which he had no means of meeting, however good his inclination—and too late he found that he had in fact become a slave, without money, without rights and without hope. Such friends as he had were in England and probably had forgotten him altogether. Perhaps if even they remembered him they were without the means of assisting him, and the chance of money reaching the individual for whom it was intended was in those days very small. Pacific railways and "ocean greyhounds" were unknown in the "good old times," and communication was slow and insecure.

Some of these redemptioners were of course more fortunate than others and had friends and connections more powerful and more kindly disposed, and such often ultimately attained their freedom. But these were the exceptions, and, generally speaking, the unhappy victim labored on from year to year, his "redemption" receding further and further into the distance till at last death put an end to his sufferings.—Chambers' Journal.

**Hard on Art.**

The storekeeper in a certain small country town was noted for his shrewdness and for his contempt of everything that was not strictly utilitarian. One of his pet aversions was a young fellow in the town who posed as an artist and once had taken some lessons in painting at the nearest large city. Finally, however, the old man was persuaded to put an "art department" in his store, not that he believed any more in art, but because he decided that if there were fools who wanted to spend their money on pictures and chromos, he might as well get it as any one else. The young painter heard of it and took down his latest production, hoping to find in Uncle Jonas a ready market for home talent.

"How much will you give me for it, Uncle Jonas?" he asked.

The old man squinted at it for a minute or two. "About $1.75, I reckon," he said.

"But, Uncle Jonas," the artist protested, "the canvas cost more than that."

"I guess it did," said the old storekeeper, "but you must remember, my son, that it was clean then."



## INSECT MIMICRY.

**Butterflies That Assume the Color and Shape of Tree Leaves.**

A phase of animal life which attracts our attention and calls forth unceasing wonderment is that of protective resemblance. Nature has wisely endowed certain defenseless animals with this peculiar faculty, which makes them mimic their surroundings so that they may avoid their enemies. This is especially true of some insects. The katydid, with its gauzy green wings, will fall zigzagging from a tree to the ground in such a way that any feathered enemy seeing it would think it a leaf. The same method of protection is seen in our common butterflies and moths that mimic flowers and leaves. The moths mimic bits of wood and stone, so that when they alight on the ground they are at once invisible to their pursuers.

Traveling fakirs in India have a way of making use of their knowledge of this faculty in insects and by means of it perform what they call a miracle. The fakir thrusts into the ground a small tree with leaves about three inches long. He then takes from a box a dozen or more butterflies of rare beauty. When the onlookers have examined these to make sure that they are real he throws them one by one into the air, and they alight on the tree and immediately become invisible. The first supposition is that the onlookers have been hypnotized; but, the fakir catching the little tree and giving it a shake, the butterflies float into the air and again settle about the tree and disappear.

The fakir then points out the illusion. The butterflies were not three feet from the eyes and had so mimicked the leaves when their wings were folded that the deception was perfect, both in color and shape. There were even the delicate mold spots, the central or mid rib of the leaf and the delicate lateral branches from it, while the stem of the leaf was closely imitated by the lower portion of the wings, which were pressed against the stem. This mimic, known to science as "kallina," if followed by a bird simply alights on a bush or tree and becomes invisible.

Other interesting instances of mimicry are found among the butterflies in India. A naturalist noted a butterfly there that was not only a remarkable mimic, but when followed it imitated the peculiar flight of a butterfly that was obnoxious to birds. In almost every group of insects we find this protective resemblance, but those among the walking sticks and walking leaves are most remarkable. In the latter we have an example of an insect so closely resembling a leaf that it bears close examination without discovery. The insect looks as if it were made up of several pieces of leaf. Still another cannot be taken for anything other than a dry brown twig or branch, so closely has it imitated the color and the sharp angles.

In all forms of life there is a tendency to adaptability to the peculiarity of its surroundings. Gayly tinted birds are not, as a rule, found on white, sandy wastes, but in forests where there is deep coloring and the contrast is not great. The lion, the giraffe, the ostrich, are forms which assimilate their surroundings. In California the horned toad is almost as invisible as the sand on which it lives. The little canyon toad mimics the rocks on which it rests, while the frog of the east is scarcely to be distinguished from the weeds among which it lives.—New York Herald.

**A Sarcastic Inscription.**

"In New York," said an author, "there is a rich man whose hobby is autograph editions of books. His library is really remarkable. Take up in it a volume of Swinburne, of Rossetti, of Guy de Maupassant, of Kipling, of George Gissing, of Tolstoi, of Daudet, of any modern writer almost, and you find on the fly leaf an interesting and affectionate letter from the author to this man.

"Very valuable these autographs must be, and very extensive must be the New Yorker's acquaintance with the best writers of the age. Yet there are some who sneer at his autograph editions, claiming to detect an amazing similarity in the handwriting of the dedicatory notes.

"One night there was a party in the New York man's house. Among the guests was an actor who is very skeptical about the authenticity of the wonderful autographs. To him the host showed a new copy of Chaucer that he had recently bought, and the actor, when no one was looking, wrote on the book's fly leaf:

"To Jack, from his dear friend and schoolmaster, Geoff Chaucer."